

Estate Structure and Formation in Adria

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Subdivisions, Estates, and Cantons

Structure of Adria

Adria is divided into subdivisions called kingdoms, archduchies, duchies, and shires. The status of a subdivision is determined at the Imperial Level by several factors, but the main one is the number of members as listed in the table below. Note that unlike the historical equivalents, these subdivisions do not exist within one another.

Subdivisions generally have a geographical area assigned to them, and all people within that geographical area are considered to be members of that subdivision, *unless they state otherwise on their membership forms.*

Members can choose to be members of a subdivision other than where they reside, but doing so has some ramifications, namely:

- You can only hold a ministry position within the subdivision of which you are a member.
- You can only hold demonstrations or autocrat events within the borders of the subdivision of which you are a member.
- If you do not reside within 200 miles of the subdivision, you wish to join, you must petition the crown of that subdivision for permission to join that subdivision.
- You can only form an estate with other members of the subdivision of which you are a member.

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Minimum Required Membership</i>
Kingdom	100
Archduchy	50
Duchy	20
Shire	1

Subdivisions and Estates

Within a subdivision, members can organize into sub-groups termed estates. The estates are termed household, barony, county and march. Like subdivisions, the status of an estate is determined by the number of people who have joined that estate, as listed in the table below.

Estates, however, can stack, meaning that the 15 members of a barony can form 3 households, and the 35 members of a barony can form 2 baronies and up to 7 households. In this way, the estates are more closely related to the historical organization of feudal societies than are subdivisions. Estates are seated (approved) by the crown of the subdivision, and are led by one or two people whose title within Adria depends on the size of the estate. The manner in which the holder of an estate is chosen varies by estate,

and the estate itself has the right to determine both how the estate holder is chosen and what, if any, criteria they have for membership, and how, when and who, is admitted into their estate.

Any member of an estate may decide to remove themselves from that estate at any time and for any or no reason. They need only tell the estate holder and the ducal chancellor of their desire to leave the estate.

<i>Estate Type</i>	<i>Number of Members</i>	<i>Estate Holder Title</i>
House	5	Lord or Lady
Barony	15	Baron or Baroness
County	35	Count or Countess
March	50	Marquis or Marquessa

Cantons vs Estates

At a recent event, someone said to me, “Cantons are a figment of the Duke’s imagination,¹” and that is a surprisingly accurate description. Cantons are an administrative convenience that the crown of a subdivision can utilize to make life a bit easier for him and for members who are geographically removed from the center of activity within the subdivision. We have several cantons because our subdivision includes 2 ½ half states, and our populace is generally arranged in a few population centers, which roughly correspond with the location of cantons. It is important to understand that cantons exist solely at the discretion of the crown, and the leader of the canton is a minister of the subdivision, and like all ministers, is appointed by the subdivision crown.

Generally, a canton is created to cover a certain geographical area. Every person who resides within that geographical area is automatically a member of that canton. This is not true for estates. A member chooses which, if any, estate they wish to join, and estates are not associated with any geographical area, other than that of the subdivision as a whole. All members of an estate must be members of the subdivision, but can come from different cantons.

What are Estates

Basic Definition

Estates are the basic political unit of Adria, and the body of estates is termed the estates general. This body is made up of landed and non-landed estates. Landed estates are those already described, and are generally formed by groups of people who have similar views on Adria and her rules and politics, although they can be centered around other ideals, such as a common persona nationality, or a focus on a certain combat or arts or service. Each landed estate holds a vote in the body of estates of the subdivision. The position of an estate on any given issue is voiced by the estate holder or his representative (or proxy). The estate holder speaks for the estate, however, how the position of the

¹ Doug Hammerberg, aka Doom Solig

estate is chosen is determined by the estate, and varies from one to another. Second and third level knights are considered to be non-landed estates and hold a vote on the estates general. Past crowns who have been granted a retirement title are also member of the estates. At the duchy and archduchy levels, these are advisory roles only, and retired crowns do not hold a vote. Past rulers of kingdoms and the empire are likewise seated on the appropriate estate body, but are voting members. Viceroys of cantons also may speak on the estates, but do not have a vote.

Why do we need Estates?

Estates are charged with much of the overall governing of the empire, and serve as a kind of check to balance the power of the crown as well as serve an important function in the governing of the subdivision. The estates approve any distribution of subdivision funds, for event or the purchase of items such as loaner gear or other items we need to effectively run our events. All contenders for the crown must be approved by a majority of the estates, and the estates may also void a challenge to the crown in the event a member declares civil war.

Subdivisions of Adria are largely expected to govern themselves, and the imperial government generally will not address any issues with a subdivision crown unless the issue involves another subdivision. It is the estates of a subdivision to whom the crown is answerable. The estates can remove a crown from office if 2/3 of the seated estates vote to do so. At the end of a ruler's term of office, the estate of the subdivision evaluate the reign and determine whether or not a retirement title is to be awarded, based on how they feel the crown served the interests of the subdivision and its populace.

Estates can also enact local rules or guidelines, so long as they do not violate the bylaws of the empire. For duchies and archduchies, these rules must be reviewed and approved by the imperial chancery.

Imperial vs. Subdivision

The Empire is governed not only by an emperor and/or empress, but also by the body of the imperial estates. The Imperial estates are made up of the rulers of the subdivision of the Empire, past emperors and empresses whose reigns were determined to be successful, the estates major and the two senior estates minor of each subdivision.

Most estates are classified as estates minor. Third level knights and Marches are considered to be estates major.

Requirements to form an estate

Any 5 members may together decide to form an estate. In order to do so a petition is written and presented to the subdivision crown for approval. Crowns may choose not to approve an estate, but they must have a just and stated cause. Meaning that they must give a reason for not approving the estate, and it can't be simply, "I think we have enough estates for Scottsmen," or something of that sort. The repression of forming estates is frowned upon, because the estates form a sort of check and balance for the power of the crown. The following requirement must be met for a petition to be valid:

- The estate must have a name
- Heraldry must have been developed and submitted to the College or Arms
- Any requirements for membership must be stated
- The estate holder must be named
- At least the minimum number of members for the estate must be named

Rights of ruling nobles

Estates Major

The ruling nobles of estates major have the right to:

- Hold court
- Appoint ministers to local offices
 - Since these ministers will be effectively deputies to the subdivision ministers, the estate holder must consult with the ducal minister, and these appointments must have the approval of the subdivision crown.
- Make war on other estate major, with the consent of the crown.
- Advise the crown.
- Give awards as defined within the estate.
- Co-rulers are allowed.

Estates Minor

The ruling nobles of estates minor have the right to:

- Hold court
- Appoint ministers to the offices of marshal, heraldry, and rolls
 - Since these ministers will be effectively deputies to the subdivision ministers, the estate holder must consult with the ducal minister, and these appointments must have the approval of the subdivision crown.
- Make war on other estate minor, with the consent of the crown.
- Give awards as defined within the estate.
- Co-rulers are allowed.
- Rulers of a household may wear a circlet and may be addressed as “Your Lordship” or “Your Ladyship”. They may be styled, “Lord *insert name here*” or “Lady *insert name here*.”
- Rulers of a Barony may be addressed as “Your Excellency” and may be styled “Baron *insert name here*” or “Baroness *insert name here*” and may wear a coronet.²
- Rulers of a County may be addressed as “Your Excellency” and may be styled “Count *insert name here*” or “Countess *insert name here*” and may wear a coronet.

In all cases any equivalent translation may be used in the place of the usual title.

² In Adria, the only difference between a crown and a coronet is the rank of the person wearing it. Adria does not restrict style or number of points to differentiate between the two.

Where to get more information

The New Member's Guide contains a nice basic description of estates, boiled down to about 3 paragraphs. Rights and regalia are defined and explained in Imperial Estates Writ #18: Armigerious Rights, Regalia & Modes of Address 2001. The bylaws of the Empire spell out the exact rights and obligations of estates and subdivisions, along with a lot of other stuff. Article V, Section F specifically addresses the rights of the estates and Article VII Section F addresses the formation and advancement of estates. These documents, and others, can be found online at <http://www.adrianempire.org/library-manuals.php>